



The Rail Gunner Weekly

41st Fires Brigade



1-21 FA



2-20 FA



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MNC-I CSM visits FOB Delta



Spc. Heather Lemanski, wheeled vehicle mechanic, of Fredonia, N.Y., 3-142nd Assault Helicopter Battalion, receives a coin from Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe, MNC-I, in the Gunner Inn East Dining Facility on FOB Delta May 15 for fending off an attacker in a shower trailer on Camp Stryker early in her deployment. The attacker, after his arrest, was found to have attacked several women.

By Sgt. Allison Churchill, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

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41st Fires Bde. PAO

Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe, the senior enlisted leader of Multi-National Corps – Iraq, visited FOB Delta to meet Soldiers May 15.

The visit was Grippe's first to FOB Delta since I Corps, out of Fort Lewis, Wash., took authority of MNC-I from XVIII Airborne Corps, of Fort Bragg, N.C., in April.

Grippe took advantage of a luncheon with senior noncommissioned officers and dinner with junior Soldiers to remind the troops what an important role they are playing in history.

"We can't affect the past but we can have a positive effect on the future," Grippe said of the current state of Iraq.

Iraq was one of the world's cultural high points before Saddam Hussein's regime took over, Grippe said, and there are signs of the good days returning.

"We stopped at the first stoplight I think I've ever seen in Iraq," said Grippe of his convoy into Kut. He

said he also saw a yogurt delivery truck, a sign that marketing and business are returning to Iraq.

American Soldiers are well able to assist the Iraqis in rebuilding their country because of the strict standards Soldiers have to meet to join the military.

"Only three out of 10 males between the ages of 17 and 35 even meet the requirements of the Department of Defense," said Grippe.

Grippe reiterated his point during a tour of the troop medical clinic, run by Soldiers from Company C, 589th Brigade Support Battalion, 41st Fires Brigade; 10th Combat Support Hospital; and 945th Forward Surgical Team.

"Let it be known why Americans can go nose-to-nose against the enemy," said Grippe, of the facilities and care available in the TMC. "You're gonna save my life if I come in here."

The command sergeant major also visited Soldiers in the 772nd Military Police Company headquarters and 1-150th Assault Helicopter Battalion maintenance areas.

The visit was part of a nearly two-week battlefield circulation tour of Iraq.

Incoming MND-S CG tours FOB Delta, Kut

By Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson
41st Fires Bde. PAO

Major General Richard Nash, 34th Infantry Division commander, visited FOB Delta May 11 and 12.

"I was very impressed with Colonel Francey, his leadership team and the mission that the 41st Fires have, a very important mission here in Wasit and what they've been able to do to build relations with all phases of the Iraqi Security Forces, as well as working on and building civil capacity," said Nash.

"They've made some real gains down here that certainly are easy for someone to see, go out and touch and see the results of it."

Nash got to see the stable security situation in Wasit province himself during a vehicle tour downtown and then a walkabout, hosted by Maj. Gen. Rasheed Filayih, Department of Border Enforcement 7th Region commander, Brig. Gen. Abed Gabr Mazloum, 32nd Iraqi Army Bde., commander, and Col. Dick Francey, 41st Fires Bde., commander.

The one thing that made this tour different was the American Soldiers were dressed like their Iraqi partners, wearing no body armor.

"I think it sends a very strong signal to all the Iraqi people that see us. We say that security has improved dramatically, life is going on, you see a very vibrant, in my estimation, economy; I saw a very clean city that people appear to care about, I did not feel intimidated at all," said Nash.

"It certainly was great to walk down the



Maj. Gen. Richard Nash listens to Col. Dick Francey, 41st Fires Bde., commander, talk about his partnerships with the Iraqi Security Forces and the security situation in Wasit, during the general's walking tour in Kut May 12.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

street, talk to the shop owners, seeing business going on and food being prepared and commerce really taking place," said Nash.

After the tour, Nash and the group returned to FOB Delta for an Iraqi luncheon followed by a meeting with the Wasit governor Latif Turfah.

Nash said that the Soldiers of the 41st Fires Bde., should be proud of what they've accom-

plished so far.

"I think they ought to be very proud of the hard work they put in during this long arduous tour. It's going to get up to about 14 or 15 months for some of these Soldiers, and certainly what I've seen, it's paid off, their hard work has paid off, and made a difference and I think all of the Iraqis they see the same thing," said Nash.

Red Bull 7 meets troops on FOB of Choice

By Sgt. Allison Churchill
41st Fires Bde. PAO

Command Sgt. Maj. Douglas Julin, the senior enlisted leader of 34th Infantry Division, Minnesota National Guard, toured FOB Delta May 12.

The 34th Inf. Div. is scheduled to take authority of Multi-National Division – South from 10th Mountain Division later this month.

"I think you'll see a lot of good support from Division," Julin told a



Command Sgt. Maj. Douglas Julin, 34th Infantry Division, listens as a Paladin crewmember from Btry. A, 1-77 FA, explains updates to the Howitzer and ammunition May 12. Julin spent a few years working with Howitzers early in his 32-year Army career.

Photo by Sgt. Allison Churchill, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

team of noncommissioned officers in 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Brigade, after the NCOs had briefed Julin on their contributions to the battle.

The Deep Strike leaders also showed Julin a guided multiple-launch rocket system and a Paladin self-propelled Howitzer. Julin spent a few of his more than 32 years in the Army as an artilleryman, and asked the crew members of each weapon system questions for several minutes.

Julin expressed genuine curiosity throughout his tour of FOB Delta, asking military police at the 772nd Military Police Company headquarters about their working relationship with Iraqi Security Forces and if Soldiers have been in contact with home recently; touring the departments of the troop medical clinic; and visiting the 589th Brigade Support Battalion, 41st Fires Bde., headquarters in Hanger 49 and the battalion-run motor pool.

"You can tell a lot by seeing and looking – and everything here looks good," said Julin.

Command Sgt. Maj. Kelvin Hughes, 41st Fires Bde., and FOB Delta's senior enlisted leader, who escorted Julin on the tour, said he had tried to choose locations with a large concentration of Soldiers available for Julin to meet and speak to.

"In the larger units, the spectrum of operations is broader," said Hughes, adding that size has nothing to do with a unit's role on the camp.

"No element on FOB Delta is more important than another," said Hughes.

Julin's tour was part of a command visit that included Maj. Gen. Richard Nash. Nash and Julin arrived on FOB Delta the evening of May 11 for a dinner with unit leaders; while Julin spent the next day touring FOB Delta, Nash toured Al Kut with 41st Fires Bde., commander, Col. Dick Francey.

Renegades welcome new first sergeant



1st Sgt. Antwone Reese stands in front of his Renegades after taking responsibility of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, 41st Fires Brigade, during a ceremony at JSS Salam May 16.

By Sgt. Allison Churchill
41st Fires Bde. PAO

The Soldiers of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, welcomed 1st

Photo by Sgt. Allison Churchill, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

Sgt. Antwone Reese to the battery during a ceremony May 16 at Joint Security Station Salam.

Reese, a native of Atlanta, took responsibility for the battery from 1st Sgt. Edgar Fuentes,

of Brooklyn, N.Y.

Fuentes said that leaving his Soldiers would be "bittersweet."

"These Soldiers are a special breed," he said in his speech during the ceremony. "What you have in front of you are proven warriors."

The Renegade commander, Capt. Richard Turvey, of Muncie, Ind., who had taken command exactly three months earlier, thanked Fuentes for setting him up for a successful command.

"What I knew was I could place my trust in the man I passed the guidon to that first day," said Turvey.

Fuentes, who has served in 2-20 FA several times throughout his Army career, has been a good role model for the Soldiers.

"You are what they all aspire to be," said Turvey.

Reese ensured he would maintain high standards.

"I will be a 360 degree leader," said Reese. "I'll listen to my Soldiers in the south, my commander to the north and my peers to my east and my west."

Upon leaving theater, Fuentes will become the 41st Fires Brigade's rear detachment sergeant major.

Reese's most recent assignment was Multi-National Division – South liaison officer for the brigade.

Combat Stress Team rotating again



Capt. Alexsa Billups, outgoing combat stress team officer-in-charge, re-enlists her noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Tech. Sgt. Brett Abbas at sundown near the Tigris River on FOB Delta May 6. Abbas re-enlisted for four more years.

Both Billups and Abbas are preparing to hand off the reigns of combat stress support to another Air Force team: Maj. Philip Bascom and Staff Sgt. Shane Roades, both out of Florida.

Billups will return to Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, and Abbas will return to Randolph AFB, Texas.

Photo courtesy of Capt. Alexsa Billups, Combat Stress Team.

Worship Opportunities Sunday

<i>Chapel 1</i>	
Traditional Protestant	0900
Latter-day Saints	1030
Gospel Service	1300
Reconciliation service	1830
Catholic Mass (English)	1930

Monday

<i>Chapel 1</i>	
Catholic Mass	0800

Tuesday

<i>Mayor Cell</i>	
Bible Study	1930

<i>Chapel 1</i>	
Bible Study	2000

Thursday

<i>TMC</i>	
Bible Study	1930

Saturday

<i>Chapel 1</i>	
Catholic Mass	0800
Christian Movie Night	2000

Micro-grant helps get Iraqi vet clinic started

By Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson
41st Fires Bde. PAO

Economic growth for small businesses is hard enough to accomplish in an established free-market democratic state such as the United States, let alone a new democracy getting off its feet.

One of the tools available for small business in Iraq is the micro-grant, which a local veterinarian in Numaniyah is using to get his clinic up and running.

"I am grateful for this opportunity and am thankful to the Coalition Forces for the chance to get my clinic running so I can help the people of Numaniyah," said Ahmed Salman Nimma, after receiving his payment of 5 million Iraqi Dinars from the 41st Fires Brigade's project purchasing officer.

"The micro-grants serve to build economy as well as to help out the small businessmen that are out there," said 1st Lt. Stephanie Christopher, 41st Fires Bde., PPO. "Most of the commerce that is out there is small businesses, and the micro-grant is there to help build on that."

According to Christopher, the micro-grant process is similar to someone applying for a loan. Information validation is the responsibility of the civil affairs section at the battalion level, before the paperwork gets to the PPO.

"My role is to receive the information from the commanders, put the packet together, make sure it complies with the regulations, forward it and then it is presented to the brigade commander for approval," said Sgt. 1st Class Alvin Carter, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment, civil affairs noncommissioned officer-in-charge. "Once it is authorized and approved, the brigade civil affairs office takes it from there."



Sgt. 1st Class Alvin Carter, 2-20 FA Regt., civil affairs NCOIC, shows veterinarian Ahmed Salman Nimma where to sign the paperwork for a 5 million Iraqi Dinar micro-grant to help get his vet clinic started in Numaniyah May 9.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

Although the process and paperwork is a little complicated, a micro-grant can really jumpstart a small business. In the case of Ahmed, the money will be used for major pieces of equipment to get his vet clinic started.

"With the micro-grant he is able to buy big, expensive pieces of equipment such as centrifuges, microscopes, vaccination guns, nitrogen coolers, vaccines, micro-centrifuges and an artificial insemination gun, all to help get his vet clinic started," said Christopher, of Plattsmouth, Neb.

"He was very grateful and this should be a big help," said Carter, of Laughton, Okla.

"It will be enough money to take care of everything he asks for," he added.

New market in Zuwarijat provides economic opportunities

By Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson
41st Fires Bde. PAO

The Wasit governor and the head of the Wasit Reconstruction team cut the ribbon on a newly constructed covered market in the Zuwarijat



Col. Dick Francey, 41st Fires Brigade commander, is surrounded by a group of kids before the ribbon cutting at the new covered market in Zuwarijat May 14.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson, 41st Fires Bde. PAO

district of Kut May 14.

"In the past, the Iraqis never paid attention to projects like this because they didn't realize the importance or the significance of these projects to their community," said Riyadh Hassan, chief executive officer, Al Ma'alem Al Asrayiah Company, responsible for the construction of the market.

"This market is going to be the core for creating jobs here and to bring in the business for this area," he added.

The 280 million Iraqi Dinar Commander's Emergency Response Program project can house up to 40 merchants to sell their goods right in the community, whereas before residents had to travel into downtown Kut to do their shopping.

"This local market was well done and a well chosen location so it is good for the people," said Latif Turfah, governor of Wasit province. "The cooperation of the PRT with Iraqi government is very necessary in order to help the people and serve the people of Wasit."

The completion of the Zuwarijat market is just one example of the cooperation between the PRT, CF and the Government of Iraqi, said Kevin Blackstone, team leader, Wasit PRT.

"Coalition Forces and the PRT support development efforts like this market throughout Wasit and throughout Iraq, and we will continue to work at the request of the Government of Iraq; by, with and through the Government of Iraq in accordance with the Security Agreement between our countries," said Blackstone.

The market is the second big project completed in Zuwarijat; the Jamaheer clinic was finished in Sept. 2008.

Col. Dick Francey, 41st Fires Brigade commander and Lt. Col. Timothy Bush, 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment commander also attended the ceremony.

Mother thanks Soldier son and his comrades through poetry

To my loved one — a Soldier...

Welcome home, I said to you, when first I saw your face -
Welcome home, I've missed you so, and then we shared a warm embrace.

I'm so thankful that you were not harmed, that you came back safe and sound -
But let's not forget your comrades, who lost both blood and lives on the ground.

I know that there's a job to do, and that someone has to do it -
I just wish there was an easier way to get all of our troops through it !

Now there's something that I need to say, to all our troops still out there -
So please read on and know how much I thank you and I care.

I want all of you to know that I pray for you each day,
and that I'll continue to do just that, until you're all home to stay !

And the friends, families, and loved ones, that you all left behind -
are also thinking of you, you're always on their mind.

We try so not to worry, we try to be brave and strong -
But know how much we just can't wait until you're back home where you belong!

So in closing, let me add , a final word or two -
Love and thanks to everyone serving our country...
America, land of the Red, White, and Blue !!!

Thanks to all of you - I know it isn't easy to be away from your loved ones...

Know how thankful we are for each and every one of you !!
May God bless all of you and may your Guardian Angels always be by your side.

By Linda Peters, mother of Staff Sgt. Timothy Peters,
41st Fires Brigade command group personal security team

Intelligence analyst joins Noncommissioned Officer Corps

Newly promoted Sgt. Brian Bell (right), of Lampasas, Texas, 41st Fires Brigade intelligence analyst, poses with colleagues Sgt. Travis Hooser, of Wichita, Kan., and Pfc. Rene Caldwell, of Houston, after the promotion ceremony in the Analyst Control Element May 14.



*Photo courtesy of Sgt. Brian Bell
41st Fires Bde.*